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HYATTSVILLE MAN INDICTED FOR BIOLOGICAL WEAPON CHARGES

Greenbelt, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today a federal grand jury indicted Myron Tereshchuk, age 42, of Hyattsville, Maryland for crimes committed in connection with his possession of ricin and nicotine sulfate, both constituting biological weapons under federal law, as well as weapons charges relating to his possession of hand grenades.

The six-count indictment charges Tereshchuk with possessing ricin and nicotine sulfate, each being toxic agents, as well as possessing at least eight hand grenades. The indictment alleges that Tereshchuk did not have any registration which would allow him to possess the ricin and hand grenades.

A search warrant executed at his residence on March 10, 2004 and unsealed affidavit in support of a search warrant alleged that Tereshchuk had been involved in harassing a business competitor. The competitor is an intellectual property firm that produces and distributes patent and trademark information, and provides services relating to patent file histories, also referred to as file wrappers. Tereshchuk has a small file wrapper business called Potomac Filewrapper Service.

Tereshchuk pled guilty to charges stemming from that dispute.

During the March 10 search at Tereshchuk's Hyattsville residence, FBI agents found firearms, grenades, chemicals, explosive powder, firecrackers and items suspected of relating to ricin production.

The defendant is currently in custody in the Eastern District of Virginia pursuant to his recent guilty plea on extortion charges. He will be sentenced on those charges in Virginia on October 22, 2004 and subsequently will have an initial appearance before a Magistrate Judge in Greenbelt, Maryland on the Maryland charges.

Tereshchuk faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment as to the count charging him with possessing a weaponized toxin. Several of the other charges include maximum penalties of either 5 or 10 years of imprisonment, as well as a fine of up to \$250,000 per count.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney James M. Trusty.